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HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY  
Cattle Raising in the Canyons

CANYONLANDS



National Park / Utah

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historic resource study

# Cattle Raising in the Canyons

CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK / UTAH

BY JAMES SHEIRE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION TEAM

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
AUGUST 1972

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The intention of this Historic Resource Study is to trace briefly the history of the cattle industry as it was conducted in the area of Canyonlands National Park. The early cattlemen of southeastern Utah knew no park boundaries when in October of each year they drifted their herds down off the mountains and plateaus into what is often called the "standing up country." When the boundaries for Canyonlands were drawn, they of course did not conform to the ranges of the ranchers who grazed cattle on the land included in the park. The history of the cattle industry in Canyonlands and Natural Bridges is therefore a part of the history of cattle ranching in southeastern Utah.

Since cattle were first introduced at the end of the 19th century to the ranges today included in Canyonlands National Park, countless men have taken advantage of the public range to graze their cattle.



## Introduction

This Historic Resource Study of the cattle industry in Canyonlands National Park was authorized by Canyonlands RSP-H-1. This RSP, written in 1968, envisaged a special study of the cattle industry in three natural areas in southeastern Utah: Natural Bridges, Canyonlands, and Arches. Since 1968 new "Activity Standards for Historic Resource Studies and Management" have been adopted. These standards outline the type of historic resource studies now undertaken by the Historic Preservation Team of the Denver Service Center. This redefinition of study types made it necessary to interpret the RSP to determine what type of study would be most appropriate for gathering the information called for in the RSP. It was decided that a Historic Resource Study of the cattle industry in Canyonlands would best comply with the original RSP. It was felt there was no need for an individual study of the cattle industry at Natural Bridges. The story there is a part of the story at Canyonlands. At Arches a Historic Structure Report of the Turnbow cabin should provide sufficient information in its historic significance section to adequately interpret the resource. This Historic Resource Study, then, concerns itself primarily with the cattle industry in Canyonlands National Park.

In 1975 a permit to graze cattle in Canyonlands National Park will expire. It will not be renewed. For the first time since the turn of the century no cattle will winter in the canyons of the present park. Cowboy caves, corrals, and a number of reservoirs will remain as artifacts. A local folklore of bawling Texas longhorns, cunning "wild cows," and a Mormon cowboy will endure. But the activity itself will have become history.

The intention of this Historic Resource Study is to trace briefly the history of the cattle industry as it was conducted in the area of Canyonlands National Park. The early cattlemen of southeastern Utah knew no park boundaries when in October of each year they drifted their herds down off the mountains and plateaus into what is often called the "standing up country." When the boundaries for Canyonlands were drawn, they of course did not conform to the ranges of the ranchers who grazed cattle on the land included in the park. The history of the cattle industry in Canyonlands and Natural Bridges is therefore a part of the history of cattle ranching in southeastern Utah.

Since cattle were first introduced at the end of the 19th century to the ranges today included in Canyonlands National Park, countless men have taken advantage of the public range to graze their cattle.



They ranged from the single cowboy with a small herd to the so called cattle kings and barons. Some spent only a winter while others were there for decades. This study makes no attempt to account for all the cattlemen who at one time or another worked cattle in the present park. Records are simply not available. Instead, the study concentrates on selected individuals as being representative of the type of cattleman who utilized park land in his operations.

The study is divided into three sections. Section one contains a very brief discussion of the open range cattle industry in the last decades of the 19th century. It was during this phase of the cattle industry, which is now enshrined in song, story, and film, that cattle were first brought to the slick rock country. Section two turns to the park itself. The topography of the land included in the park determined the ranges. Two major rivers, the Colorado and the Green, flow through the park and in a sense split it into sections. Section two of the study traces the history of cattle grazing on the east side of the Colorado. It is this section of the park that is most closely identified with the cattle industry. Section three turns to the park land located between the two rivers, i.e. the Island-in-the-Sky and White Rim country. The west section of the park beyond the Green and Colorado is not dealt with in terms of individual cattlemen. Not only is this a relatively small section of the total park, but also it has not been previously studied by local historians. Nothing has been published about cattle raising in this part of the park. This is not to say that no cattle ever wintered in the Maze or Land of Standing Rocks, or that nearby Robbers Roast is not colorful local folklore. Rather, the important phases of the cattle industry took place on the east side where excellent summer ranges were nearby.

potential of driving cattle from the vast Texas herds north. As the buffalo disappeared and hostile Indians were pacified, ever increasing numbers of cattle moved up the trails to be shipped to eastern packing houses or to stock the empty plains of beckoning free grass. Beginning in the 1870s, corporations, very often English or Scottish owned, formed to exploit the new hoofed western resource. By 1886, the year of severe winter storms that killed cattle by the thousands, the ranges throughout the West had been stocked. Names such as Prairie Cattle, Powder River Cattle, Matador Land and Cattle, Swan Land and Cattle, and Western Land and Cattle dominated any discussion of cattle raising in the West. The organization of agriculture on a corporate basis, which we today call agribusiness, is nothing new. The very big companies, whose herds ran in the thousands and whose acreage numbered in the tens of thousands, were motivated by visions of incredible profits. After the big die up, decline set in. There were many reasons for the failure. Barbed wire fencing allowed owners to cheaply

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L. Maurice Fink, W. Farrantine Jackson, Agnes Wright Spring, When Grass Was King, (Boulder, 1956) p. 24.



## Part One

### The Range Cattle Industry

The mountain man, Oregon Trail pioneer, and cavalryman are all important symbols of the "Old West." None of them, however, equals the allure of the cowboy in the country's popular imagination of the true West. In song, in story, and on celluloid the cowboy has long fascinated millions. Although cowboys still ply their trade on the ranches of the West, the era from which they derive their romantic image has long passed. That era was the period of the great open ranges in the second half of the 19th century. In the very brief span of about 35 years an industry grew, matured, and passed away. Cowboys and cattle kings, having been displaced by the sod-buster, granger, or homesteader, joined the mountain man and covered wagon pioneer in the pantheon of national folk heroes. "The elements of which they were made," an enthusiastic historian of the era has written, "were those that have from the beginning comprised the American spirit and moved it ever toward the American dream."<sup>1</sup>

The region most closely associated with the open range cattle industry included the states of Texas, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. Beginning shortly after the Civil War Texans such as Joseph F. McCloy and Charles Goodnight recognized the economic potential of driving cattle from the vast Texas herds north. As the buffalo disappeared and hostile Indians were pacified, ever increasing numbers of cattle moved up the trails to be shipped to eastern packing houses or to stock the empty plains of beckoning free grass. Beginning in the 1870s, corporations, very often English or Scottish owned, formed to exploit the new hooved western resource. By 1886, the year of severe winter storms that killed cattle by the thousands, the ranges throughout the West had been stocked. Names such as Prairie Cattle, Powder River Cattle, Matador Land and Cattle, Swan Land and Cattle, and Western Land and Cattle dominated any discussion of cattle raising in the West. The organization of agriculture on a corporate basis, which we today call agribusiness, is nothing new. The very big companies, whose herds ran in the thousands and whose acreage numbered in the tens of thousands, were motivated by visions of incredible profits. After the big die up, decline set in. There were many reasons for the failure. Barbed wire fencing allowed owners to cheaply

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1. Maurice Fink, W. Turrentine Jackson, Agnes Wright Spring, When Grass Was King, (Boulder, 1956) p. 24.



fence their ranges and thus deny access to non-land owners. This cut down the availability of free grass. The small rancher and farmer converged on the public land demanding that they had as much right to share in its bounty as the cattlemen who regarded it as their own. Overstocking, always in hopes of increased numbers and thus increased revenues, took place. Many companies were overcapitalized and soon the dividends started drying up or the managers paid them out of capital. Storms took their toll. Many of the companies suffered from mismanagement. Periodic financial crises made money markets uncertain and contributed substantially to sharply falling prices. By the turn of the century the era of the free open range, when grass was indeed king, had come to an end.<sup>2</sup>

The movement of cattle into this area east of the Colorado River came from two directions. The first men to settle in Grand and San Juan counties came from the Mormon settlements in central Utah west of the "standing up country." They were soon followed by non-Utah natives from the East. These men bought out the Utah settlers and proceeded to stock the ranges with Texas cattle. In a very brief period between 1875 and 1885 southeastern Utah became a part of the open range cattle industry as it was conducted from Texas to Montana. Whereas the first men into the area were small ranchers, those that replaced them represented large corporations. They organized the industry on a basis of huge herds and extensive grazing areas covering thousands of acres. The Carlisle brothers, who managed the interests of the Kansas and New Mexico Cattle and Land Company, were the major cattlemen in San Juan county during this period.

Although the operations of the Texans identified with the Kansas and New Mexico Cattle and Land Company lasted only until the middle of the 1890s, the company's passing did not mean the end of the large cattle company. New owners, primarily men from the Mormon settlements of Bluff, La Sal (also called Copete), and Moab, quickly stepped in to take their place. They formed pools and other types of cooperative arrangements such as the company. At the turn of the century the cattle industry on the west side of the Colorado was characterized by a few large companies and many small, often single family, operations. This pattern of a few very large outfits and numerous small ranches has continued to the present day. As we shall see below, the names changed, with the Redds and Scorup and Somerville replacing the Carlises, Cunnighams, and Lacays, but the basic structure of the cattle industry remains today much as it was at the turn of the century.

The ranges of today's Natural Bridges National Monument and Canyonlands National Park have witnessed the major phases of the development of the cattle industry in southeastern Utah. The Texas chased "wild" cattle into the area, and then, Dark Canyon, and White Canyon. Settlers moved into the area and bought out the small ranches. A very large outfit called the Scorup-Somerville Cattle Company. More than any other single cattlemen,

2. Louis Pelzer, The Cattleman's Frontier (New York, 1936) p. 20.



## Part Two

### The East Side

During the era of the open range cattle industry the first cattle herds were introduced into Grand and San Juan counties in southeastern Utah, the region of today's Natural Bridges National Monument, Canyonlands National Park, and Arches National Park. The movement of cattle into this area east of the Colorado River came from two directions. The first men to settle in Grand and San Juan counties came from the Mormon settlements in central Utah west of the "standing up country." They were soon followed by non-Utah natives from the East. These men bought out the Utah settlers and proceeded to stock the ranges with Texas cattle. In a very brief period between 1875 and 1885 southeastern Utah became a part of the open range cattle industry as it was conducted from Texas to Montana. Whereas the first men into the area were small ranchers, those that replaced them represented large corporations. They organized the industry on a basis of huge herds and extensive grazing areas covering thousands of acres. The Carlisle brothers, who managed the interests of the Kansas and New Mexico Cattle and Land Company, were the major cattlemen in San Juan county during this period.

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The ranges of today's Natural Bridges National Monument and Canyonlands National Park have witnessed the major phases of the development of the cattle industry in southeastern Utah. The Texas chased "wild cows" in Beef Basin, Dark Canyon, and White Canyon. Settlers moved into the area of Indian and Cottonwood Creeks and started small ranches. They in turn were bought out by a single, very large outfit called the Scorup-Somerville Cattle Company. More than any other single cattleman,



John Albert Scorup, this company's principal owner and its manager, can be called the cattleman of the canyons. In the brief sections that follow, these phases of cattle raising east of the Colorado are discussed in greater detail.

### Settlement and the Advent of the Big Companies

It was not until the middle of the 1870s that southeastern Utah became an area of interest for settlers. The seemingly barren nature of its environment and its relatively high Indian population had deterred settlers from moving in at an earlier date. Starting at this time settlers moved into the area from two directions. From the east out of Colorado and Kansas came experienced cattlemen searching for new ranges. From the west came Mormon settlers both individually and as members of church organized missionary and settlement groups. Both the cattlemen and the Mormons shared a common goal, namely, the utilization of the new lands for agricultural purposes. The open range cattle industry, which was demonstrating that supposedly barren plains could indeed be turned to economic advantage, was responsible for opening up the canyon country to settlement.

Although a man by the name of William "Nigger Bill" Granstuff is reported to have had about 40 head of "horned stock" in San Juan County as early as 1875, the first large herd, approximately 200 head, to locate in the country belonged to two settlers from central Utah named Philander Maxwell and Billy McCarty.<sup>1</sup> They settled at La Sal in 1877. Two other men, Tom Ray, who was related to Philander Maxwell, and Cornelius Maxwell also arrived with Maxwell and McCarty. They were all drawn to the region by the excellent ranges found in the nearby La Sal Mountains.

At approximately the same time farther south in the area of Blue Mountain (today called the Manti-La Sal National Forest) two brothers named Pat and Mike O'Donnel recognized that these mountains would also make an excellent range. They moved an unknown number of cattle onto Dodge Point. In 1879 a cattleman from Trinidad, Colorado, by the<sup>2</sup> name of "Spud" Hudson decided to go to Utah to buy some cattle and drive them back to Colorado. He was attracted by a lucrative price difference. Cattle bought for \$10 a head in the Utah settlements could be sold for \$55 in Colorado. On his way to the Utah settlements he passed through

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1. Frank Silvey, History and Settlement of Northern San Juan County, n.p., n.d., p. 3, (copy Utah State Historical Society).

2. Cornelia Adams Perkins, et. al., Saga of San Juan, San Juan County Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1968, p. 89.



the Blue Mountain area. He too recognized its potential for cattle raising and he soon had 2,000 head grazing in the area. In the next few years Hudson rapidly increased the size of his herd. Others, men named Peters, Dudley Reece, and Green Robinson, followed Hudson's example. Indeed, Hudson helped Reece and Robinson get started when he loaned each man \$5,000.<sup>3</sup>

In 1880 a large herd came out of Texas, Colorado, and New Mexico to graze the Blue Mountains. This was the L.C. outfit owned by Mrs. I. W. Lacey. Mrs. Lacey set up headquarters on Recapture Creek near old Verdure.<sup>4</sup> Whereas in 1875 there were few if any cattle around Blue Mountain, by 1883 there were approximately 15,000 head of Durhams and Texas longhorns grazing in the area.<sup>5</sup>

The next few years saw the advent of the big companies. In 1883 the Carlisle brothers arrived in Utah. These gentlemen, apparently Englishmen by birth, had been ranching in Kansas. They were the American-based managers of an English-owned organization called the Kansas and New Mexico Cattle and Land Company. Kansas and New Mexico was another of the many Scottish and English companies which had been formed to profit from the American range cattle boom. The incorporation of the company took place in early 1883 in London.<sup>6</sup> The partners, including the Carlisle family, had put up 150,000 pounds, about \$700,000, and all looked forward to large dividends. Although not a large company when compared with some in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, or Wyoming, Kansas and New Mexico was big indeed. It operated in Utah, Colorado, Kansas, and New Mexico.

The Carlisles started their Utah operation by buying the cattle of local ranchers. The 7,000 head they purchased consisted of the herds of Peters, Green Robinson, Dudley Reece, and a half interest in the herd of "Spud" Hudson. The purchase price was \$210,000 with yearlings going as high as \$35.<sup>7</sup> These animals, probably Durhams and other short horn stock, joined the already substantial Kansas and New Mexico herds. As of 1885 the size of the Carlisle herd in Utah

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3. Silvey, History and Settlement, p. 8.

4. Perkins, et. al., Saga of San Juan, p. 90.

5. Don. D. Walker, "The Carlisles: Cattle Barons of the Upper Basin," Utah Historical Quarterly, 32 (Summer 1964), no. 2, p. 269.

6. "The Kansas and New Mexico Cattle and Land Company, Memorandum and Articles of Association," 1883, Colorado Historical Society.

7. Walker, "The Carlisles," p. 271.



was estimated at 10,000 cows.<sup>8</sup> It grew steadily. The Carlisles set up ranch headquarters at two cabins that Peters had built. Soon called Carlisle, this small community was located a few miles north of present Monticello.

During the same period farther to the north at La Sal another company was formed. In 1884 a group of Pennsylvania businessmen, having noted the tales of incredible profits to be had in range cattle grazing, and apparently believing them, formed a company called the Pittsburgh Cattle Company. In 1885 representatives of the company arrived at La Sal and proceeded to buy out the interests of the Maxwells, Rays, Billy McCarty, and Green Robinson. All were La Sal pioneers with the exception of Robinson, who had moved to La Sal after selling his Blue Mountain herd to the Carlisles. When the Pittsburgh Cattle Company's first year in Utah did not bring the hoped for large dividends, the company's directors decided to change its management. Thomas D. Cunningham, a Blairsville, Pa., banker who had invested in the company, recommended that his nephew, John M. Cunningham, be offered the job of assistant manager. The directors agreed and in 1886 John moved west.<sup>9</sup> At the same time Thomas B. Carpenter, a relative of another stockholder, was also offered a job with the company. In 1888 John Cunningham became company manager with Carpenter taking over the duties of ranch foreman. Together the two men increased the company's holdings in the La Sal area. In 1895 Cunningham, Carpenter, and one Fred N. Prewer bought out the Pittsburgh Cattle Company and set up a new company called the La Sal Cattle Company.

By 1890 the best ranges on the eastern border of the canyon country had been occupied. Where a short 15 years previously only a few cattle grazed, there were now tens of thousands. Three big outfits dominated the area: the Carlisles with their three bar, hip, side, and shoulder brand; the Lacey or L.C. outfit; and the Pittsburgh Cattle Company with its crossed H brand. These large operations were in a sense non-Utah outfits. They were owned by non-Utah interests and employed primarily Texas cowboys. Their primary accomplishment was the integration of southeastern Utah into the larger range cattle industry.

During these same years between 1875 and 1890 other settlers moved into southeastern Utah. These people were Mormons from the well established Utah communities whom the church called upon to extend the frontiers of Mormon settlement. The best known of these

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8. Ibid., p. 272.

9. James L. Cunningham, Our Family History Subsequent to 1870, (Pittsburgh, 1943), p. 67.



missions was the Hole-in-the-Rock group which set up a colony at Bluff in 1880. The Peace Mission, as it was named, at Bluff was followed by the Blue Mountain Mission which in 1888 founded Monticello. As we have already seen, the communities of Moab and La Sal (or Coyote) were established in 1875 and 1877 respectively. Like the large cattle companies, these communities were dependent on agriculture for their material well being. However, unlike the large companies, they did not have large herds or extensive ranges. They at first concentrated on building irrigation ditches and planting crops and orchards. Because the companies controlled the more desirable grazing areas from the La Sals to Blue Mountain, smaller operators, including cowboys who had worked for the big outfits, were forced to look for new, as yet unexploited ranges. In seeking areas to graze their small herds they turned west into the seemingly barren and impenetrable standing up country of today's Natural Bridges National Monument and Canyonlands National Park. Although Texas cattle grazed in these areas, it was not considered prime range land.

In 1885 two men named Mel Turner and D. M. Cooper with two small herds settled at the junction of Cottonwood and Indian Creeks. Their ranch was called the Dugout, a name still in use today. Others followed with their herds, among them Harry Green, Lee Kirk, V. P. Martin, and the Joseph Titus family. In 1887 one John Brown built a cabin on Indian Creek. Brown planted an orchard and fenced land for growing hay. Irrigating water came from Indian Creek. Also in 1887 a brief attempt was made to start a Latter Day Saints settlement on Indian Creek, but, when no settlers arrived, it was abandoned. In 1895 Dave Goudelock, an ex-Carlisle cowboy, set up a fine ranch at the head of Cottonwood Creek. All these settlers apparently did well. Some pooled their interests, such as Cooper, Martin, and Goudelock, who formed the Indian Creek Cattle Company.<sup>10</sup>

By the 1890s the ranges of southeastern Utah had been fully stocked. Indeed, they were already overstocked and as a result overgrazed. Texas cattle were found in the area of Natural Bridges, where the cowboys camped under one of the arches. It is probable that Texas cattle also grazed in today's Canyonlands National Park, but the extent of such grazing is unclear. The Carlisle operation, the area's largest, wintered its immense herd below the San Juan on its New Mexico ranges. In the fall the Pittsburgh Cattle Company drove its cattle into Colorado to ranges around Montrose. The L.C. Outfit apparently wintered its cattle in the area, but it is doubtful that they reached as far north as Canyonlands National Park. This left the smaller ranchers such as the Indian Creek settlers. Goudelock, Martin, Kirk, and Cooper grazed their cattle both summer and winter if not actually within Canyonlands, then most certainly in its immediate vicinity.

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10. Perkins, et. al., Saga of San Juan, p. 192, 3.



Indeed, it is almost certain that they wintered at least some of their animals within Canyonlands. Others fed on hay grown along Indian Creek. The early Indian Creek settlers established the first cowboy camps within the present park. These camps were used by all those who followed and today they are the principal remains in the park of the cattle industry.

The beginnings of the cattle industry in southeastern Utah between 1875 and the 1890s set the pattern for land utilization in the area. The high plateaus and mountains served as the summer ranges. Although not a major area for wintering cattle, the lower canyon country to the west became a winter range. When in 1891 John Albert Scorup, who would eventually control the canyon country east of the Colorado from Indian Creek to the San Juan, arrived in the area, the basic techniques of cattle raising in the standing up country were already well established.

In addition to establishing an industry, the years of settlement and the big cattle companies have become an important part of the folklore of the canyon country. There are numerous stories of clashes between wild Texas cowboys and peaceful settlers. Other stories concentrate on the misdeeds of outlaws and criminals who either came to the area to escape justice or committed crimes once there. Cattle rustling, a standard in the catalogue of crime in the West, is the stuff of many tales. The canyons, deep, dark, and impenetrable, become ideal rustlers hideouts. Still other accounts of the area as wild, wild West center on conflicts between Ute, Piute, and Navajo Indians and white settlers and cowboys. In most of these stories the white settlers are depicted as peace-loving citizens who desired nothing else than the rapid acculturation of the Indians. The Indians who caused trouble are described as recalcitrant renegades who refused to see the error of their ways. There is little doubt that much of the folklore of the canyon country rests in historical accuracy, but there is also little doubt that each story has been embellished over the years.

The antagonisms between the cowboys and the settlers were real. They apparently were not deep rooted, but friction between the two groups was a constant source of trouble. Texas cowboys from the big outfits became famous for upsetting peaceful dances at Bluff or Monticello. On more than one occasion a wild bunch from the Carlisle headquarters rode into town and shot it up in good Hollywood fashion. There were also a number of murders. The compilers of the Cunningham family history reported that Moab "was populated almost entirely by Mormons and boasted a very poor school. It was plentifully sprinkled with saloons and grog shops of the lowest type and the moral standards were below our worst imaginings, therefore the family lived at Montrose during the school months and at La Sal in the summer."<sup>11</sup>

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11. Cunningham, Our Family History Subsequent to 1870, p. 69.



It is doubtful that John Cunningham would have agreed with this statement. The manager of the Pittsburgh Cattle Company and later owner of the La Sal Cattle Company was a prominent member of the community. He carried out many public functions such as membership on the committee that opposed the plan to turn the area over to the Indians for a reservation. Nevertheless, the statement does reflect how some of the non-Utah natives did view their neighbors. The people in the towns had an equally low opinion of some of the cattle companies. According to Albert R. Lyman, a local historian who experienced the period, the Texas camps were often little better than "bureaus of information and outfitting points for outlaws planning to flee across the reservation or wanting to drop from sight down White Canyon."<sup>12</sup> Conflict between the settlers and the cowboys was not constant, and many cowboys settled in the area and contributed to its growth and development, but the early troubles between the two groups did become a part of local history and folklore.

It would be a mistake to romanticize the early settlers of the canyon country or to overdramatize their pioneering feats. Nevertheless, the people who settled southeastern Utah did in fact face many hardships, challenges, and deprivations. Their endurance and fortitude cannot be written off as sentimental or nostalgic cliches. The environment they entered with little more than primitive tools and their own labor could indeed be very harsh. Constant work, be it drifting cattle from one pasture to another, starting a small business, or digging irrigation ditches to bring precious water, characterized the period. Most were motivated not only by the quest for material prosperity. They also viewed their venture in terms of a mission. Most were successful. In establishing their communities as viable centers of civilization and society, and in developing the agricultural potential of the area, they proved that its environment could be formed and shaped to satisfy human needs. The relationship to the land was direct and immediate. It was not their enemy, but the struggle to adjust to its conditions and turn them to their advantage was constant. It is doubtful that many of these pioneers viewed their environment in aesthetic terms, although many explained the meaning of their experience on religious grounds. The landscapes which are today prized for their natural bridges, rock formations, and mysterious canyons were to most of them a true wilderness: a formless, unshaped, forboding, and at times dangerous unknown. The landscape conditioned them as they slowly adjusted to it and made it their own, but it would be many years into the 20th century before they would view the canyons as an area to be set aside for its scenic and natural values. Parks are for people who have the leisure time to cultivate an appreciation of them. Leisure was an unknown concept to the early settlers of the canyon country.

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12. Albert R. Lyman, Indians and Outlaws, Settling of the San Juan Frontier, (Salt Lake City, 1962), p. 111.



## John Albert Scorup

In 1891 a 19-year-old man from Salina, Utah, crossed the Colorado at Hite and headed into the standing up country east of the river. His name was John Albert Scorup. For the next 68 years the name J. A. Scorup, as some called him, or Al Scorup as he was known to others, would be synonymous with cattle raising in the southeastern Utah canyonlands.

Between 1891 and 1918 Scorup centered his activities in the area of White Canyon. During this 27 year period Al, together with his brother Jim, put together one of the largest outfits in southeastern Utah. They did it by work, work, and more work. It took the two brothers years just to get started. When he originally came to the canyon country, Scorup did not own a single cow. One Claude Sanford, a fellow Salina resident, offered him one third of the calves from Sanford's 150-head herd located in White Canyon, if, as a Scorup biographer writes, "he could find the cattle in the maze of cracks, washes, and cliffs that split and hedged the country."<sup>13</sup> Not only did Scorup face the difficult task of finding Sanford's cattle, and then working the half wild animals in a difficult terrain, he also had to contend with the Texans who frowned on anybody impinging on the ranges they considered their own. Discovering that he was broke before his calves were of any value, Scorup decided to go to work for the Texans to earn some cash with which he could purchase the supplies he needed to support himself in the canyons. After working on a drive from Utah to Colorado, Scorup returned to Sanford's cattle. The Texans, who were waiting, ran him out. Al returned to Salina discouraged but not beaten. In Salina he talked his brother Jim into going in with him. In 1892 the two Scorups returned to White Canyon, this time bringing with them 300 head that they had leased from ranchers around Salina. Prudence said that they avoid the Texans. Keeping out of the way of the Texans dictated that they find a place to work their cattle that the big outfits were not interested in. Such place was the north side of White Canyon and the area around Wooden Shoe. Making their homes in caves and shanties always near their cows, the two brothers settled down.

For the next five years they got no place. The first winter the snow did not come and the herd suffered. In 1893 the weather improved and they branded 300 calves, but their return was only enough to keep going. The same year, however, brought developments that were to be of great long-run benefit to the Scorups. The Texans, caught up in the decline which was affecting the entire range cattle industry, moved

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13. Neal Lambert, "Al Scorup, Cattleman of the Canyons," Utah Historical Quarterly, 32, (Summer 1964), no. 3, p. 303.



out of White Canyon. This could have meant that the entire White Canyon and Wooden Shoe area would now become Scorup range. It did not. The citizens of Bluff organized the Bluff Pool and bought about 1,300 cows and 300 horses from the departing Texans. In addition to the stock, they purchased the sellers' former range. Their fellow Mormons were not as antagonistic to the Scorups as the Texans had been, but they remained rivals. The winter of 1894 hit hard. Experience had taught the two brothers that when bad weather came, the only solution was to live with the cows and literally hand lead them to food and water. The Scorups suffered, but the Bluff Pool herd was decimated. Discovering that only 600 of the original 1,300 head had survived, the Bluff cooperative decided to get out. They hired Al Scorup to drive their herd to market in Colorado. When he returned to White Canyon, the range was his.

Undisputed control of grazing land did not bring an immediate upswing in the brothers' fortunes. The cattle market, if it could be called that, was depressed and there were no profits in 1895 and 1896. The winter of 1896-1897 was again hard and the Scorup herd suffered. At the end of the 1897 roundup, after six years of constant work, the Scorups discovered that they barely had sufficient cash to buy supplies. Their herd consisted of a grand total of 40 cows and a few calves.<sup>14</sup> The range was theirs, but they had nothing to put on it.

Jim wanted to get out, but Al talked him out of it. A chance to earn some cash was at hand, he explained, and with the cash they could rebuild their herd with quality animals. The Bluff Pool, which continued to buy out the departing Texans, knew that literally hundreds of animals from the huge Texas herds had gone wild and were ranging among the jumps and breaks between Bluff and the Colorado. The pool figured that each of these animals was worth \$10, if they could be found. Recognizing an opportunity, Al Scorup offered to round up the wild cows for \$5 a head. The managers of the Bluff Pool, not desiring to risk broken ribs and shattered legs by chasing the cows themselves, accepted.

Leaving Jim to take care of their small herd, Al headed into the canyons. All winter, when the animals could be tracked and when they could not run in the deep snow, Al and a few other men chased the wild cows. It was difficult work. An experienced cowboy described the torturous work:

You couldn't lay that rope on in any fancy way like those trick ropers in the rodeos because of the thick trees. Oh! They wasn't

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14. Ibid., p. 310.



so thick but what you couldn't get your breath, but too thick for riding. Here's where a good fast horse earned his money. He'd get you right up there, trompin on the steer's heels, where you could lean over and lay your loop right over his horns easy like. Then you'd bust him. When his head whipped around behind him and his belly went into the air, if you hurried you could get him hog tied before he even tried to get up.

Of course, a cowboy was in luck if he got his steer hog tied in those few seconds, because any critter older than a calf or yearlin would most likely get up full of fight. Older cows and steers had long, sharp horns, which were wicked and vicious, and a bull's strength and quickness could give you a scare. Many a horse has been horned, and some of them gutted and killed by angry critters that got up before the hog tie was completed. But a good horse would keep the rope taunt and the animal stretched out. Without that perhaps you's just as well not try.<sup>15</sup>

And so it went for Al Scorup through the winter and into spring. When he finished, he delivered 2,000 cattle to the Bluff Pool and placed \$10,000 in the bank. The Scorups were back in the canyonlands cattle business again, and this time it was for good.

1896 saw another development of long term benefit to Al Scorup. The Kansas and New Mexico Cattle and Land Company, which had been moving cattle out of the region for a number of years, wound up its operation. Like the other large cattle companies of the range cattle industry, Kansas and New Mexico had suffered from falling prices, overstocking, and the coming of the homesteaders. The Carlisles finally gave up. The Bluff Pool bought out their remaining interests. Two years later the Bluff Pool decided to sell. Al Scorup was ready to buy. A steady pace of growth and expansion began for the Scorup brothers.

In 1901 or 1902 they purchased pure bred Hereford bulls which added not only to the quantity, but even more important, to the quality of the herd. Year after year the Lazy TY brand was seen on more and

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15. Karl Young, "Wild Cows of the San Juan," Utah Historical Quarterly, 32, (Summer 1964), no. 3, p. 258



more cattle that grazed over tens of thousands of acres from the Elk Ridge of the Blue Mountains to the San Juan River. By 1918 Al Scorup was one of the biggest cattlemen in Utah.

The center of the Scorup brothers' cattle raising operations between 1891 and 1918 was White Canyon and the Wooden Shoe. During these years, according to a Utah historian, Jim Scorup helped re-discover and name the natural bridges which are today a part of Natural Bridges National Monument.<sup>16</sup> The two brothers did not, however, graze their cattle as far north as Canyonlands National Park. Dave Goudelock's Indian Creek Cattle Company and other small ranchers occupied the area of Indian and Cottonwood Creeks. Unfortunately, nothing is known about this company's activities (primarily because Utah historians have understandably concentrated their attention on the big outfits like Scorup and the Carlisles). Goudelock did, however, develop a prosperous ranch. In 1918 this veteran cowboy, who had worked for the Carlisles in 1883, decided to sell.

At the same time Al and Jim Scorup had decided to get out of the canyon cattle business. Both men had married. Al had moved his family from Bluff to Provo so that his six daughters could attend good schools. Jim's wife never did move to southeastern Utah, but rather remained in her native Salina. Both men desired to be nearer their families. When they learned that a good breeding operation was for sale in Sevier Country near Salina, they decided to buy it. In 1918 they sold the White Canyon-Wooden Shoe outfit to their long-time friend Jacob Adams and purchased the Sevier County ranch.

When Al Scorup heard that the Indian Creek Cattle Company was for sale, thoughts of life as a leisured gentleman rancher were forgotten. Hurrying off to Moab he talked Bill and Andrew Somerville into going in with him to purchase the outfit. When Jim heard about the deal, he was angry, but calmed down when it was decided that Jim would run the Sevier County place while Al would manage the Indian Creek ranch.

In 1919 Al had no sooner organized the new operation and was working hard to fight off a very severe winter than tragedy struck. Jim Scorup, deeply depressed by the death of his wife the previous year, contracted pneumonia and suddenly died. Back at the Dugout, the name of the ranch's headquarters, after attending the funeral, Al discovered that a three foot blanket of snow was decimating his herd. By spring he had lost 2,000 head. "It was," he was later quoted as saying, "the worst year I have ever lived."<sup>17</sup> Giving up never entered his mind--he just worked harder. Within a few years he had recovered.

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16. Lambert, "Al Scorup, Cattleman of the Canyons," p. 308.

17. Ibid., p. 314.



In 1926 Al Scorup, the Somervilles, and Jacob Adams joined together to form the Scorup-Somerville Cattle Company. By buying out the smaller ranchers between Indian Creek and Adams' holdings to the south, S & S Cattle Company was soon the biggest ranch in Utah. The herd, which varied from 7,000 to 10,000 head, ranged over some 1,800,000 acres from Hatch Wash on the north to the San Juan on the south and from Grand Gulch on the east to the Colorado on the west. This range included both Natural Bridges National Monument and most of Canyonlands National Park east of the Colorado. When in 1928 Al Scorup sold 4,400 cattle for \$194,000, the company paid off its note to Dave Goudelock. Al Scorup had become a "cattle king."

From 1928 until his death in 1959 J. A. Scorup managed the Scorup-Somerville Cattle Company. He successfully brought the company through the depression and watched it prosper during World War Two and the difficult post war years. In later years, as his health weakened, he turned over much of the day-to-day responsibility to others such as his son-in-law Harve Williams, but he remained until his death the respected leader of the Bar X Bar and the Lazy TY outfits.

In 1935, a year after the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act that introduced the permit system to the public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, J. A. Scorup applied for a permit. In his application he pointed out that for 35 years he had ranched the area of the canyon country on a "mixed basis."<sup>18</sup> By mixed basis Scorup meant that the S & S Cattle Company had not turned to a specialized branch of cattle raising such as breeding or feeding. S & S remained an open range cattle ranch in a time when most of the American cattle industry had turned to specialization. The basic techniques of Scorup's operation remained constant from 1901 to the middle of the 1950s.

Scorup's first challenge was the adaption of cattle raising to the conditions of the environment. For Scorup that environment consisted of the Manti-La Sal National Forest and the barren breaks and canyons of the canyonland country. The open range cattle industry, the Carlisles and the Lacey's, had proven that the Blue Mountain ranges made excellent summer pastures. When the Texans moved out and the Bluff Pool failed, the way was open for Scorup to move onto the Blue Mountain ranges. There his cattle grazed peacefully through the summer. The coming of winter, which covered the mountains with snow, made it necessary to move the cattle to lower elevations. The

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18. "S & S Cattle Co. File," Records of District No. 6, Monticello, Utah, Box Number 72A725, R.G. 49, Records of the Bureau of Land Management, Denver Federal Record Center (hereafter cited as S & S File, BLM Records).



Carlisles had driven their cattle into New Mexico. Scorup, who had no grazing rights there, was forced to look elsewhere. He turned to the canyons where he had got his start in the 1890s. The disadvantages were many. The land was indeed very broken, desolate, and barren. Ideally 200 acres were required to support a single cow. But the area also had advantages. Above all, cattle could winter there on the open range thus eliminating the cost of buying feed. For Scorup this was crucial. On Indian Creek it was possible to raise sufficient alfalfa to feed calves being weaned and a part of the herd. These irrigated fields, however, could not produce sufficient hay to feed the entire herd. Purchasing feed would have made the whole operation unprofitable. The bulk of the herd required a range where the cattle could graze from October to the end of May. The standing up country provided such a winter range.

But the canyon country had its own conditions. There was sufficient grass, and snow brought water, but getting the cattle to them was another matter. The twisted breaks and canyons taught Scorup the most important single rule in raising cattle in such an environment: stay with the cows. In the canyonlands the cattle required constant care and attention. Because grass did not grow in lush green open pastures, but rather consisted of clumps spread over miles and miles, it was necessary to constantly move the animals from one area to another. The cows wandered. If one did not keep an eye on them, they would soon disappear up a draw or into a thicket where they could die or soon go wild. If the snow got too deep, it was necessary to move them to where grass could be found, or, if there was no snow, cowboys had to be present to find water and get the cattle to it. Constant care of the animals was a major factor in Scorup's successful adaptation of cattle raising to the canyon country.

When in 1926 the S & S Cattle Company joined the White Canyon outfit with the Indian Creek operation, the company's range reached from Hart Draw to the San Juan. The size of the herd fluctuated. In 1936, after grazing permits were required for BLM managed land, the size of the herd was placed at 5,400. The distribution of the herd is shown on the accompanying BLM map of S & S operations in the canyon country. The breakdown by area as of 1936 was:

- 1,000 cattle in Hart's Draw and Dry Valley,
- 1,500 in Cottonwood, Indian Creek, and the Needles,
- 500 in Beef Basin,
- 600 in Dark Canyon,
- 100 in Red Canyon,
- 600 on Wooden Shoe and in White Canyon,
- 150 horses and 50 cattle in Secret,
- 50 cattle in Grand Gulch, and
- others at home on feed and pasture.<sup>19</sup>

19. Ibid.



In addition approximately 1,000 cattle ranged all year between Bears Ear and Hole in the Rock.

In 1937, a group of BLM officials accompanied by J. A. Scorup made a tour of the S & S range. "Over a period of some 40 years," they reported, "the S & S Cattle Company has learned from experience the approximate number of cattle which can be wintered in the various canyons within the unit." The distribution was given as:

- 1,000 cattle in Hart Draw and Dry Valley,
- 1,500 in Cottonwood, Indian Creek, Lock Hart (sic),  
and the Needles,
- 500 in Beef Basin,
- 600 in Dark Canyon,
- 100 in Red Canyon, and
- 1,500 from Bears Ear to Hole-in-the-Rock.

It is also interesting to note that at the same time S & S were grazing 7,000 sheep in Hart Draw and Dry Valley (like the other cattlemen in the area, S & S owned sizeable numbers of sheep; indeed, sheep far outnumbered cattle in the area).<sup>20</sup> Whether the range could actually support these cattle is another question. Without going into great detail on animal unit months, it is nevertheless safe to assume that much overgrazing took place.

The yearly cycle began in May when the cattle were rounded up from the winter ranges and driven to summer pasture in the Manti-La Sal National Forest. They remained there until October. In October the herd was again rounded up and pushed down to winter in the canyon country. Calves were cut out and taken to the Dugout where they were weaned by placing them on feed. The animals selected for market were also cut out and the long 110 mile drive up the driveway from Hole-in-the-Rock to Thompson and the railroad began. According to Jim Scorup, a son of Al's brother Jim, who went to work on the ranch when he was 15 and worked there until 1967, the herd gathered for market often consisted of 2,200 to 2,400 animals. It was divided into two sections,<sup>21</sup> each of which was equipped with its own chuck wagon. About five to seven cowboys rode with each herd, at least as far as Moab, where one or two men, having grown thirsty from the dust, always seemed to disappear. The drive was hard work. The men went to bed long after

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20. "Range Survey Trip Over Unit or Allotment No. 7 within Utah Grazing District No. 6 by members of the Utah No. 6 local Advisory Board and members of the Division of Grazing," BLM Historic Files, Monticello District Headquarters, Monticello, Utah. Scorup was a member of the local advisory board.

21. Interview, Sheire with James Scorup, May 19, 1972.



dark only to get up again around 2:00 A.M. Food consisted of bacon and potatoes for breakfast, a fast mid-day meal, and beef, a canned vegetable, potatoes, and sourdough or baking powder biscuits for dinner. A normal drive lasted about 12 days. When it was over, the men were glad to get back to the Dugout.

Winter found the cattle in the canyon country, a part of which is today included in Canyonlands National Park. Jim Scorup provided a description of what it was like to work cattle in the canyons. A trip into the area started at the Dugout. There each man packed his belongings, a couple of changes of clothes, and his bedding on a pack mule. Other mules carried food, often kegs of drinking water, and grain for the horses. Each man took two horses which he rode on alternate days. Arriving in the canyons the men made camp at a spring that had been in use since the days of the Indian Creek settlers and the Texans. Many of these camps were located in caves. One was situated under one of the bridges in Natural Bridges National Monument. The cave or arch became home. A working day lasted from before daylight until after dark. The main task was just keeping an eye on the cattle, moving them around to feed and water and making sure they were alright. At times calves were branded, cut (castrated), and vaccinated. Cooking took place over an open fire. A dutch oven was constantly in use and the food consisted of the usual cowboy gourmet delights: bacon and hash browns, canned vegetables and fruits, baking powder biscuits, and the always present coffee. A typical tour at a camp lasted six weeks, but it was not unknown that a cowboy spent three, four, and even five months pursuing his lonely occupation. When a cowboy came back to the Dugout, he usually got three days off to go to town to visit his family or have a fling. He also got a week off at Christmas. Al Scorup allowed no women at the Dugout, save for an occasional Ms cook. The pay was not much, \$60 a month and board and room, but it was steady. Scorup, who never missed a payroll, demanded that his men work as long and as hard as he himself did. He could be as contentious as a stubborn steer, but he always treated the men fairly. A "rip ass," the cowboy who enjoyed running the cows or jerking horses around, did not last long. The many camps that dot the present park bear witness to the cowboys who worked in the area. The accompanying map shows the locations of many of them.

Scorup was not only concerned about the quantity of animals sent to market, but also about the quality of his herd. He purchased the best Hereford bulls "money could buy." S & S maintained two or three pure bred herds. One of them was kept on Salt Creek. They were known as the "aristocrats." Scorup was also interested in improving the range. In cooperation with the BLM he strung miles of fence and constructed countless reservoirs. Some of them were not successful. No sooner did they fill up with water than a sink hole opened. Where the water went nobody knew.



Beginning in the 1950s both the Forest Service and the BLM started cutting back on the number of cattle allowed to graze the public domain. From 1943 to 1953 the government agencies had allowed 6,640 cattle.<sup>22</sup> After that the number fell. Overgrazing had been a major range problem since the days of the huge Texas herds. The BLM started tightening up. At the same time pressure to remove cattle from the National Park Service administered natural areas increased. In the eyes of many nature lovers, the cattle not only overgrazed the land upsetting delicate ecological systems, but they were also incompatible with scenic landscapes and preserved natural wonders. When in 1962 the state of Utah studied the potential economic impact of the proposed Canyonlands National Park, only 683 cattle, 6,436 sheep, and 18 horses were grazing on park land.<sup>23</sup> Jim Scorup can remember when it was common to put 1,200 head into the Needles alone. By 1967 the number of cattle on park land had dropped to a few hundred head from December to the end of February. The area was rated as containing only 550 AUMs (animal unit months).<sup>24</sup>

Al Scorup's death in 1959 marked the end of an era in cattle raising in southeastern Utah. His had been a rags to riches story in the Horatio Alger interpretation of the American Dream. He came to the canyons in 1891 as a 19-year-old green cowboy working another man's cattle. When he died, he was among Utah's largest cattle ranchers and had been elected to the Cowboy Hall of Fame. During his almost 70 years of hard and persistent endeavor, he had proven that man could turn the environment of the canyonlands to his advantage. He challenged the slick rock country and it yielded. In so doing he defined a level of man's relatedness to nature: our continuous striving to humanize our environment through exploitation of its natural resources. The land, which he called his worst enemy and his best friend, was indeed his, as he was indeed the land's.

In 1967 the Scorup and Somerville Cattle Company went out of business. Robert Redd, a young and energetic cattleman and a member of a family long in the cattle raising business, purchased the ranch. He changed its name to the Indian Creek Cattle Company. Today as one drives down Indian Creek on his way into Canyonlands National Park he passes the Dugout, ranch headquarters where Bobby Redd makes his home. Back under the large Cottonwoods the visitor can see the structures put up over the years by Goudelock and Scorup. Irrigated fields stand green. Herefords peacefully graze against a backdrop of rimrock and

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22. S & S File, BLM Records.

23. Robert R. Edminster, An Economic Study of the Proposed Canyonlands National Park and Related Recreation Resources, University of Utah Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1962, p. 126.

24. S & S File, BLM Records.



blue sky. Cattle raising continues on the east side of the Colorado, although it will soon end in the park itself. Continuing down the road one sees signs of cowboy activity. At the park entrance there is a large corral in the canyonland tradition. Rimrock forms three sides of the corral with a brush and pole fence on the forth. A few miles into the park the visitor comes to a side road which takes him to Cave Spring. If he expected to see a babbling brook, he is sadly disappointed. The spring is nothing more than a seep emitting its precious water drop by drop. But it is water, and where there was water the cowboys made a camp. The nearby cave, enclosed by a pole fence, remains remarkably as it was during the years before automobiles traversed the area. It is a well preserved artifact of cattle raising on the east side of Canyonlands National Park. This study recommends that it be preserved as a Canyonlands historic resource.

### Part Three



### Between the Rivers

Although the area of Canyonlands National Park east of the Colorado River was the most important cattle raising section in the park, cattle also grazed in other areas. Such an area was the large "V" between the Colorado and Green Rivers.

Unfortunately, Utah historians have not studied the local history of this area. As a result there is no published information on cattle raising between the rivers. Given such limited secondary sources, it is not possible to construct an accurate chronological picture of all the men who at one time or another ran cattle in this section of the park. Interviews with local residents help fill the gap, but the total picture remains fragmentary.

### Part Three

Many individuals have through the years raised cattle on the public domain in the middle section of Canyonlands National Park. The place names for many of the area's topographical features are at the same time a listing of some of these men. Gray's Pasture, the Shaffer Trail, Murphy Hogback, Taylor Canyon, and Holman Spring Basin are all named after early day cattlemen. Other names, such as Stevens, Loveridge, Tibbets, McElroy, Sullivan, Scker, and Baker are associated with the area. Unfortunately, none of these men wrote their memoirs.

In his overview of the Utah cattle industry, Everett L. Cooley, a close student of the subject, places the area between the Green and Colorado from 1896 to 1899 within the vast ranges of Preston Nutter.<sup>1</sup> Along with the Carlisles and John Cunningham, Nutter was one of Utah's early day cattle kings. If Nutter cattle ever grazed between the two rivers in today's park, there is no record of it. It is doubtful that his operations extended that far south.

The first men to run cattle in this area were the families who settled in and around Hosh. As we have already seen, the Maxwells, Bays, and McCartys came to the La Sal Mountains around 1877. Following them in 1878, '79, and '80 were the Fowells, Shaffers, Tibbets, and Pierras. These families settled in the Hosh area. In the early 1880s came others such as the Murphys and the Loveridges. More followed.

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1. Everett L. Cooley, "An Overview of Utah's Cattle Industry," Utah Historical Quarterly, 32 (Summer 1964), no. 3, p. 179.



most of these families depended on cattle raising for their livelihood. The early arrivals, e.g., the Maxwells and Rays, moved into the checker La Sal Mountains. As the better ranges were taken up, new arrivals pressed out from both looking for places to graze their cattle. Some moved over the Colorado.

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The first man to graze cattle on the Big Flats or Grey's Pasture is unknown. In the late 1880s or early 1890s one Deb Taylor moved cattle into the area of the Big Flat and Taylor Canyon. At about the same time the Murphys put cattle onto the Island-in-the-Sky.<sup>2</sup> By the turn of the century they had been joined by Al Holeman and, in addition, by men named Reardon, Snyder, and Patterson. Together these men held down the Big Flat, Grey's Pasture, and Taylor Canyon.

It is unclear how they utilized these ranges. For some the area was a winter range. In the summer the cattle were driven to the La Sal Mountain. Others, however, used these ranges the entire year. In summer the cattle grazed Big Flat and Grey's Pasture and in the winter they moved to lower elevations. For example, Taylor and Holeman drifted their cattle down Taylor Canyon to the Green and then along the river bottom and into the area of Upheaval Dome. As of 1914 this area was locally known as the Taylor-Holeman range. How many cattle were involved is unknown.

Sometime after 1900 a man named John Jackson moved into the area. Jackson had sold out at Blue Mountain and moved to Moab. He ran cattle in the Dry Valley - Hatch Point - Hart Draw region. Seeking a winter range, he one fall drove his herd down Cave Spring Wash to the Colorado. He crossed over near Potash and drifted the animals as far south as Monument Basin. About 1914 or 1915 the Shaffer family, which had previously purchased the range of a man named Stewart, bought Jackson's range. John Shaffer, or "Sogg" as many people called him, put cattle below the Neck. He is best remembered for his development of the Shaffer trail.

Also in 1914 Otho Murphy and his brother Jack were looking for a range. Jack, 24 at the time, had heard that there was open range between the rivers from one High Turner. Jack went down Indian Creek and crossed the Colorado. He liked what he saw. Returning to Moab he talked to his 16-year-old brother Otho and together they decided to give it a try. Taking 25 head they moved into the area. Murphy's range extended from what is today called the Murphy Hogback down to the confluence of the rivers and back up to Monument Basin. The area north of Murphy's range on the west was controlled by Taylor. On the east Shaffer had the range above Monument Basin. For the next three years the two brothers worked

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2. Interview, Sheire with Otho Murphy, May 21, 1972.



cattle in this area of the park. During this time they built the trail named after them. In 1917 they decided to purchase more cattle. Since they did not have the cash, they borrowed from a Moab bank. The brothers moved the new stock onto their range between the rivers. By working hard, they were confident, they could soon pay off the note. Unfortunately, embezzlement intervened when someone at the bank ran off with its funds. This forced the bank's president to call in loans. The Murphys were forced to sell their cattle, and thus ended their days as Canyonlands cattlemen.<sup>3</sup>

Effram Moore, Bill Tibbets, Kenny Alredd, Art Ecker, "Wash" Johnson, Orthel Pederson, Carlisle Baker, the Loveridges, Art Murray, and the Perkins are all names of men who raised cattle in this century in the area between the two rivers which is now a part of Canyonlands National Park. Some of them, such as Ecker and Baker, also raised horses. The Loveridges ran large numbers of sheep in the area. Unfortunately, a clear, consistent picture of who had which range and for how long is not available.

Ray Holyoak, a Moab cattleman whose family came to southeastern Utah with the Hole-in-the-Rock group, is another of the men who had cattle between the rivers. Holyoak's outfit is a good illustration of how cattlemen operated in this most difficult environment. Between 1929 and 1937 Holyoak together with a brother and "Wash" Johnson worked anywhere from 250 to 500 cattle. Their range covered most of the area on both sides of Island-in-the-Sky. It extended from above Murphy's Hogback around and below White Rim to the Shaffer Trail. Holyoak utilized the area as a winter range. The cycle was similar to that on the east side of the park. In October the cattle were drifted down from the higher plateaus such as the Big Flat or the La Sal Mountains into the canyon country. There they grazed until the middle of May, when they were again moved to higher elevations. Roundups took place in both spring and fall. Like Scorup's cowboys, Holyoak literally lived with the cattle during the time they were in the present park. Trips into the area lasted anywhere from one to two months. A trip out to Moab to get fresh horses and supplies was limited to a few short days, and then it was pack the mules and back to the cattle. There were not many well established cowboy camps on this side of the park. Holyoak and Johnson spread out their blankets wherever there was sufficient water and wood. Food consisted of canned goods, dried fruit, salted bacon, cured ham, and, of course, potatoes. Drinking water was often packed in five gallon kegs. Dutch ovens, tin cups and plates, and kettles were also a part of the camp gear. The day began at first light and lasted until after dark. The cows required constant attention moving them from one grazing area to the next, from one rock tank to another. Some winters there was not enough snow and water gave out.

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3. Ibid.



When this happened, it was necessary to move the cattle down to the river. It was a tricky task, because there was always the danger that the animals would get bogged down in the quicksand along the river bank. When water was scarce there was another danger, namely, the cows could choke to death. The cattle would drift out to the edge of a rim and remain there breathing the moist air coming up from the river. If a cowboy was not close at hand, the cows would simply stand there until they "choked."

Taking care of the cattle for seven months was tiresome and tedious work. But moving them out of the area was the most difficult time of year. Holyoak used all the trails, the Shaffer, Murphy, and the trail around Upheaval Dome and out Taylor Canyon. In one respect the trails were an advantage. One simply threw poles across them to keep the cattle from wandering out of the area. Holyoak had natural fences on his range. However, when it came time to push the cattle up the trail, they became dangerous. Holyoak remembers that 1934 was a particularly bad year. There had been no rain and water was scarce. He had already been ten days trailing them out and they were becoming tired, foot sore, and, above all, thirsty. On the Shaffer Trail, which at places narrows to three feet, they started balling up. The lead cows, smelling the humid air rising out of the canyon, turned and attempted to go back down the trail. As more animals turned, their horns hooked cows coming behind them. As these now frightened cattle attempted to turn around quickly on the narrow trail, they in turn hooked cows bunched up against them. Holyoak was helpless. He could not get up into the congestion to straighten the herd out. One cow after another lost its footing and dropped off the trail. Tumbling down the hillside the helpless animal lodged in some rocks where it was impossible to get it loose. Holyoak said that he had to cut the throats of 29 cattle during this particular drive out. It was a substantial loss in a depression year. For seven months he had cared for the cattle from dawn to dusk only to see 29 of them die before he could get them to market or to the summer range. After this experience Holyoak went to dehorning, which would prevent hooking in the future. He also decided to find a more hospitable place to raise his cattle. In 1937 he left the standing up country.<sup>4</sup>

Its remoteness from civilization made this area of the park a perfect setting for tales of rustlers. Only tenacious cattlemen ventured into the area which was something of a barrier between eastern and middle Utah. Cattle stolen in middle Utah could be considered home free once the thieves got them through the canyon country. A few miles ahead lay the Colorado border and a ready market. There is little doubt that stolen cattle passed through this area going from one side to the other, but it is doubtful that it was a favorite rustler thoroughfare.

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4. Interview, Sheire with Ray Holyoak, May 21, 1972.



In 1962, when the establishment of Canyonlands National Park was being discussed, it was reported that there were only 23 cattle grazing between the rivers. There were, however, 5,638 sheep on permit.<sup>5</sup> This would seem to indicate that the area had lost its interest as a cattle range. The number of cattle had slowly declined during the 1940s and 1950s. As happened in other areas of San Juan and Grand Counties, sheep, once the cattleman's worst enemy, replaced cattle as the area's principal hooved visitor. Beyond the boundary, however, on the Big Flat and down Horse Thief Point cattle still graze. At Horse Thief Ranch "Mac" McKinney, a former National Park Service employee at Arches, and his wife operate a small ranch. Their home, which is a study of the blending of native materials and environment, stands as a living artifact of how cattlemen adapted to the area.

#### Conclusion

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5. Edminister, An Economic Study of the Proposed Canyonlands National Park, p. 126.



Man's relationship to Utah's canyon country has been long. Indians were the first people to inhabit the area. Over a long period of time they successfully adapted their settlement patterns and subsistence to the area's natural environment. The Euroamerican presence in the area is a relatively recent development. It has only been a century since the first settlers arrived on Blue Mountain and at Moab, La Sal, and Bluff. Like the Indians they displaced, these Americans defined their relationship to the area in terms of its ability to provide the material basis for their society.

The Texans were the first to arrive. Motivated primarily by hopes of large profits, they extended the 19th century range cattle industry into western Colorado and southeastern Utah. The Carlisles' Texas and New Mexico Cattle and Land Company and John M. Cunningham's Pittsburgh Cattle Company were in their structure, organization, and operation similar to the other large cattle companies that dominated the western ranges from Texas to Montana. Because their interests rested almost exclusively in cattle raising as big business, they devoted little energy to building communities and developing an infrastructure. When the range cattle industry declined during the 1890s, they declined with it and left the area. Their legacy was a substantial body of folklore. More importantly, they had proven that the area would support cattle. Their large herds undoubtedly overgrazed the ranges and damaged them for decades to come, but they had demonstrated that by utilizing the mountains and high plateaus as a summer range and the canyons as a winter range cattle would thrive. They developed the basic techniques of cattle raising in the area, techniques that continue to the present day.

The Mormon settlers at Moab, La Sal, and Bluff came into the area with intentions different than those of the Texans. Their objectives were to make peace with the Indians (e.g. the 1830 Hole-in-the-Rock Peace Mission which founded Bluff) and develop communities. They were motivated as much by religious dedication to their "stakes," as those settlements were called, as by thoughts of material well-being. Their desire to establish small businesses, schools, churches, and social services distinguished them from the Texans who in the beginning were their neighbors. They too depended on the land. Economically they defined their relationship to the canyon country in terms of the types of agricultural activity that were adaptable to the environment's conditions. They dug irrigation ditches, planted alfalfa and crops, and raised cattle and sheep. Their relationship



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to the arid land was immediate. Devising techniques which when applied to the environment would yield bountiful harvests and increased herds consumed their energies. They had neither the time nor the means nor indeed the education to perceive the canyon country in terms other than as an environment to be mastered so that their communities would prosper. With a primitive technology they challenged the land, adapted to it, and conquered it. Al Scorup, who arrived with literally nothing, learned that the area from Indian Creek to the San Juan would support cattle, if one stayed with the animals and moved them around in winter. The men who ran cattle between the Colorado and Green learned the same lesson. In the role and function of the cattleman they related to the canyons. They were never in harmony with their environment nor did they view the landscape as a place where immortal truths are forever taught. A drought could wipe out years of hard work. The blowing sand, which sculptured the rock, made their lives miserable. Deep snow could force them to borrow to buy expensive feed, and it then took years to pay back the loan. J. A. Scorup summarized the cattleman's relationship to the canyon country when he called it his worst enemy and his best friend.

The cattle ranchers were not interested in scenic or natural values. These were perceptions of the area cultivated by men who worked and lived in different environments. Some residents deeply appreciated the mystery and beauty of the area. Kent Frost, who grew up on a farm near the canyons, wrote a book called My Canyonlands in which he describes how the standing up country became a life long fascination. But Frost is an exception. The cattlemen did not think of the canyons in aesthetic or scientific categories. Talk of the region's wilderness values or its ecological uniqueness left them unmoved. They were not nature lovers or preservationists. But if they did not perceive the canyons aesthetically nor joy in its geological and archeological treasures, they were still of the land. In a naturalistic sense the environment conditioned them. Physically their shoulders hunched up. Even walking down the street in Monticello or Moab the cattlemen appeared as if they were moving cows in a sand storm or watching the animals with their backs to a winter wind. Their lined and furrowed faces spoke of dust, sun, and wind. Psychologically and intellectually they related to the changing seasons and nature's rhythm. Each season brought it own conditions. Move the cattle to summer pastures in the spring, get them down into the canyons in winter. When the rhythm was broken, when a violent storm struck or it did not rain, they suffered. When the weather was good, when it rained and snowed and the springs ran full and the fields were well irrigated, the cattle did well, to the cowboy's silent contentment. When the fall drive was over, and the cattle had been delivered to Thompson or the yearlings sold to another rancher, there was satisfaction. They had worked hard for a year and they had been rewarded. There was money in the bank to pay off loans, buy a new bull, or make improvements at home. Riding home from Thompson in the cool fall air



they looked out across the spires and pinnacles of the jagged canyons. For a moment there was recognition, sympathy, and identity. The land belonged to them, because they belonged to the land. Then the wind came up and the sand started to blow. Hunching their shoulders they hurried the horses along. They had better get home for there was work to do.

#### Recommendation for Historic Preservation



Canyonlands and Natural Bridges are of course natural areas. Their preservation and interpretation are rooted in natural and scenic values. At the same time both areas have an interesting human history. One phase of that history is the cattle industry in southeastern Utah which this Historic Resource Study (HRS) sketches in its broad outlines. Artifacts of the cattle industry are found in Canyonlands. These historic resources consist of cowboy camps and reservoirs. In addition, the park's trails were originally laid out and often developed by the cattlemen. This HRS recommends that artifacts of the cattle raising period in Canyonlands be preserved.

At the present time the cowboy camp at Cave Spring, which according to Jim Seerup was one of the most important, is preserved in a fine condition. It is recommended that this camp continue to be preserved. Technically this resource is of the third order of significance (Recommendation for Historic Preservation: Trusted with state or national significance). The recommended level of treatment is preservation. The resource is in a condition that no restoration and/or reconstruction is necessary. Preservation of the resource will require stabilization and maintenance. A historical architect can be consulted for recommendations concerning stabilization and maintenance.

At the present time the Cave Spring Camp contains a variety of objects connected with a cowboy camp, (e.g. a stove, feed box, bottles, cans, horse equipment, and the like). Many of these objects are as much curiosities as authentic camp fixtures. Many are not historic and still others would not have been found at the camp. It is recommended the furnishings of the cave be restored to their historic appearance. There are still many older cowboys in the area who worked for Seerup who can be helpful (Jim Seerup, who lives in Monticello, is one possibility).

The Cave Spring resource is already developed. A good secondary road extends to the site. Consideration could be given to improving parking. It is remarkable that the site has not been vandalized. The objects in the cave could be easily stolen, yet this has not happened. Protection, however, could become (indeed, should become) a problem. It is recommended that the gates to the cave be closed and that visitors not be allowed to enter the cave itself. The visitor can obtain a good view of the camp from outside the fence.



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The Cave Spring camp is the only historic resource connected with the cattle raising theme that is recommended for formal preservation. However, the other cowboy camps scattered throughout the park should be regarded as historic resources. They should not be torn down or in other ways demolished. Consideration could be given to placing interpretive markers at these sites. Given the preserving qualities of the dry environment, these camps will be recognizable for decades to come. They should not be made the object of visitor use by formally classifying them as historic resources. Rather, they will there for the visitor to encounter as he enjoys the park's scenic and natural values.

The preserved Cave Spring camp will be self interpreting. In addition, the park may wish to consider a small publication which briefly tells the story of cattle raising in the area. Interpretation by NPS personnel will depend on their interest in the resource. Personnel stationed in the Needles district especially may be interested in reading the HRS and/or the bibliography. The interaction of man and his environment is at the present time very popular throughout the service. In the Canyonlands-Natural Bridges-Arches area the cattle industry was historically a major moment in man's interaction with his environment. By successfully adapting cattle raising to the southeastern Utah environment, the early day cattleman proved that the area could support types of human endeavor. The aesthetic and natural science values of these areas are indeed their major interest. But it is well to remember that in the past men did work and prosper in such an environment. The preservation of historic resources is one way of remembering that past.



List of Classified Structures

<u>Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Order of Significance</u>	<u>Level of Treatment</u>
1. Canyonlands-HS-1	Cave Spring Cowboy Camp	Third	Preservation



This historical base map pertains only to the cattle industry. Other sites of historical interest such as archeological sites, the sites of mining activity, or the paths of early explorers are not shown on the map. The sites identified are those of cowboy camps. Cattle trails are in most cases identical with the present day trail system. The location of the camps was obtained through interviews with local individuals associated with cattle raising in the park. The map is probably not a definitive identification of all the locations in the park where cowboys camped through the years. The map does, however, identify the more important and most used camps.

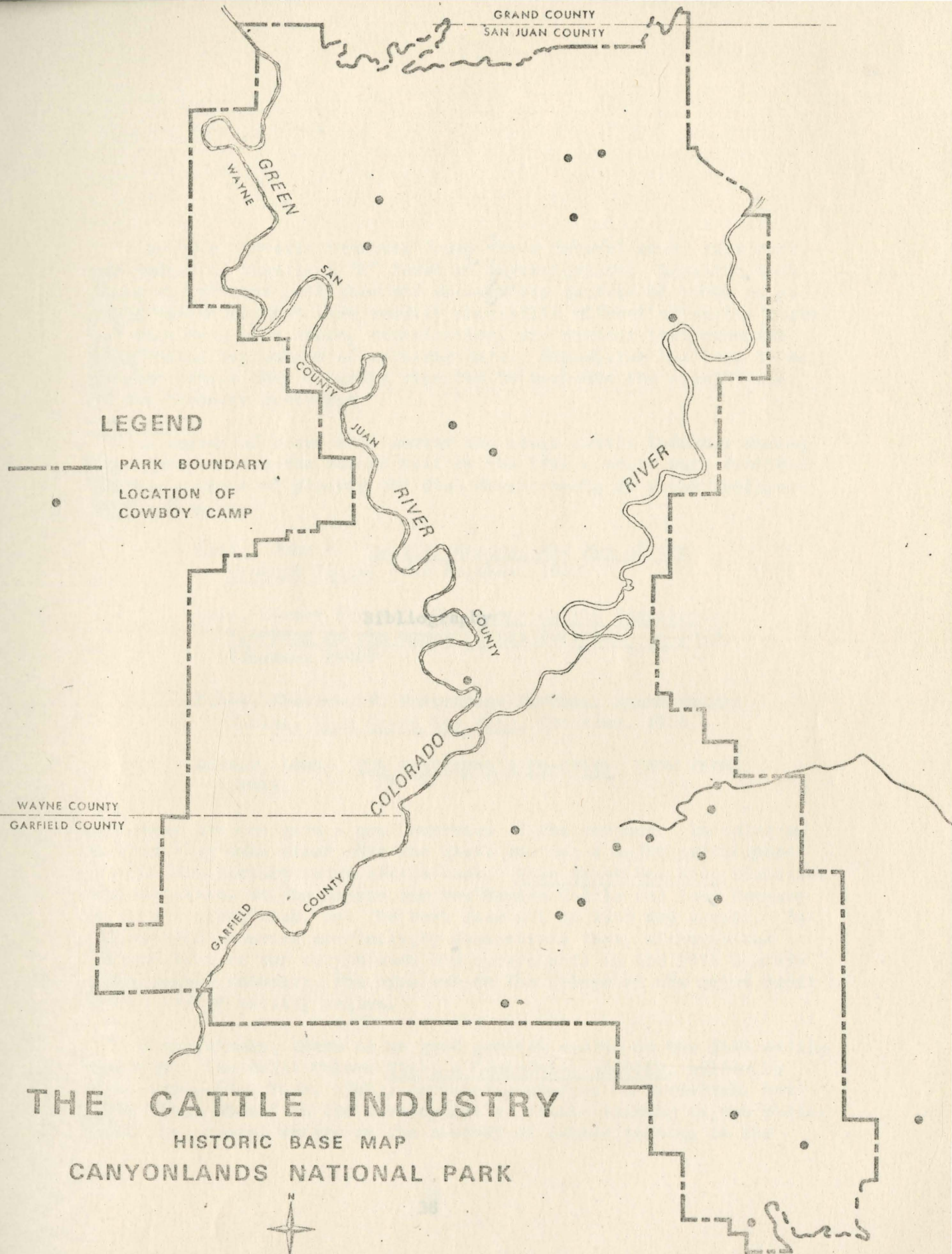
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THE CATTLE INDUSTRY  
HISTORIC BASE MAP  
CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK





# LEGEND

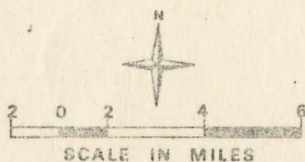
----- PARK BOUNDARY

• LOCATION OF COWBOY CAMP

## THE CATTLE INDUSTRY

HISTORIC BASE MAP

CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK





Before a Historic Resource Study for a natural area, this study was judged to require a "B" level of investigation. Research took place in selected published and documentary sources of known or presumed relevance that were readily accessible without extensive travel and that were of a scope, organization, and content that promised significant extraction of relevant data. Exposition has been in no greater detail than directly required to evaluate the significance of the historic resources.

A number of books that survey the range cattle industry during the period during the second half of the 19th century were examined for the purpose of placing the Utah developments in proper perspective. They are:

Sully, John A., Cattle, Horses, and Men of the Western Range, (Los Angeles, 1945).

Dale, Edward E., Bibliography on Cattle Industry, Ranching on the Great Plains from 1865 to 1925, (Norman, 1949).

Frank, Maurice, V. Turrentine Jackson, Agass Wright Spring, When Grass Was King, (Boulder, 1956).

Bulzer, Louis, The Cattlemen's Frontier, (New York, 1938).

All these sources give a good overview of the subject. In relation to Utah they make clear that the state was not a major participant in the 19th century range cattle boom. When Grass Was King discusses the activities of the Kansas and New Mexico Cattle and Land Company in southeastern Utah, but the book does not go into any detail. Together these sources convincingly demonstrate that, although the eastern end of the canyonlands did participate in the 19th century range cattle industry, the area was on the fringe of the major Great Plains cattle raising region.

Unfortunately, there is no good general source on the Utah cattle industry. The multi-volume Utah, A Centennial History, edited by John Gunther (New York, 1949), contains a chapter on livestock, but there is no detail on the development of cattle raising in the state. There are several essays on the history of cattle raising in the



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Utah Historical Quarterly such as Don D. Walker, "Longhorns Come to Utah," 30 (Spring 1962), no. 2, but they usually deal with a specific cattleman or a particular aspect of the industry. The summer 1964 volume of the Quarterly is devoted entirely to the cattle industry and is the best single source for a general review of Utah cattle raising. It also contains articles on specific cattlemen. All the articles were used in preparing this study with Don D. Walker's "The Carlises: Cattle Barons of the Upper Basin," and Neal Lambert's "Al Scorup, Cattleman of the Canyons," being the most valuable. In Standing Up Country, The Canyon Land of Utah and Arizona (New York, 1964) C. Gregory Crampton presents a well written and beautifully illustrated history of the region. His brief discussion of cattle raising in the area is good given the scarcity of sources available to him. In addition a paper by the same author, "The San Juan Historical Sites," Anthropological Papers, University of Utah, no. 70 (June 1964) throws light on early settlement in San Juan County. Edward Abbey, Slickrock, The Canyon Country of Southeast Utah (New York, 1971) is a typical beautiful Sierra Club publication, but it is of little value on the history of the area. Indeed, Abbey's text demonstrates the antipathy of the contemporary nature lover to human activities, such as cattle raising, in the slick rock country. Three technical reports deal with the economics of cattle raising in the canyonlands and Utah in general. They are:

Report of the Utah Committee on a Proposed Canyonlands National Park in San Juan, Wayne, and Garfield Counties, Utah, 1962 (This is a publication of the Utah legislature).

Evans, John R., et. al., Beef Cattle in the Utah Economy, University of Utah, the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, December, 1962.

Edminister, Robert R., An Economic Study of the Proposed Canyonlands National Park and Related Recreation Resources, University of Utah Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 1962.

None of these reports discuss the historical aspects of cattle raising as a business or industry. The Edminister study does, however, contain statistics on the number of range animals in Canyonlands at the time of its establishment.

Among the best sources for the history of cattle raising in the canyon country are the local histories written by residents of the area. There are a number of such histories.



Lyman, Albert R., Indians and Outlaws, the Settling of the San Juan Frontier, (Salt Lake, 1962).

Perkins, Cornelia Adams, Marian Gardner Nielson, Lenora Butt Jones, Saga of San Juan County, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1968.

Tanner, Fran McConkie, A History of Moab, Utah, (Moab, 1937).

Silvey, Frank, History and Settlement of Northern San Juan County, n.p., n.d., (copy Utah Historical Society).

Being local histories these books are primarily interested in discussing the pioneer period in the area. They identify the first people who lived in each community and narrate stories of difficulties with the Indians, outlaws, and the Texans. Each of these sources concerns itself with the early cattlemen in the canyon country, but none of them go into any detail on the industry itself.

The best source on the Carlisle brothers' operation is the Walker article noted above. In addition the Colorado Historical Society in its western range collections has microfilm copies of "The Kansas and New Mexico Cattle and Land Company, Memorandum and Articles of Association." Unfortunately, the same depository does not have any other company records.

In addition to the Lambert article, "Al Scorup, Cattleman of the Canyons," there are several other sources dealing with the area's best known cowboy. David S. Lavender in his One Man's West (New York, 1956) devotes a chapter to Scorup's rise entitled "Mormon Cowboy." The Bureau of Land Management records, Record Group 49, Denver Federal Record Center, contain a large "S & S Cattle Company" file. This file details the permits issued to the Scorup and Somerville Cattle Company. In addition it contains some interesting correspondence on Scorup's dealings with this federal agency. Other sources on the Scorup brothers which were not examined include Stena Scorup, J. S. Scorup: A Utah Cattleman, n.p., n.d. The author was not about to locate a copy of this privately printed book either in Monticello or at the Utah Historical Society. The author also did not examine any of the company's records that are apparently in the possession of Mrs. Harve Williams, Al Scorup's daughter. Should they ever become available, they would throw new light on the company's activities.



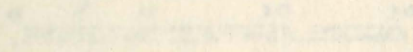
As far as the author could determine, there is no published material dealing with cattle raising in the area of the park between the Colorado and Green Rivers. The brief and fragmentary picture presented here is derived from personal interviews. Interviews took place with the following men, all of whom were associated with cattle raising in today's park.

1. Sheire with Ray Holyoak, Moab, Utah, May 21, 1972. Holyoak ran cattle between the rivers.
2. Sheire with Otho Murphy, Moab, Utah, May 21, 1972. Murphy also had cattle in the area between the rivers.
3. Sheire with Lewis "Mac" McKinney, Horse Thief Ranch, May 21, 1972, McKinney, an ex-NPS employee, has lived in the area for years. He supplied information on a number of people.
4. Sheire with Reed Wilson, Monticello, Utah, May 20, 1972. Wilson, a veteran Bureau of Land Management employee, discussed the S & S Cattle Company and identified a number of the cowboy camps.
5. Sheire with Art McKelvery, May 20, 1972. Mr. McKelvery works for Bobby Redd's Indian Creek Cattle Company. He supplied information on present day operations.
6. Sheire with James Scorup, May 19, 1972. Jim Scorup is the son of James Scorup, the brother of Al Scorup. Jim worked for Scorup and Somerville from the age of 15 until the company was sold in 1967. He supplied information on many aspects of the company's operations and the life of the canyonlands cowboy.



GRAZING DISTRICT NO. 5  
UTAH

SCALE



Illustrations

Handwritten notes in a circle:  
1500-1600 ft  
500-600 ft

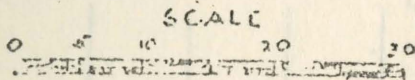
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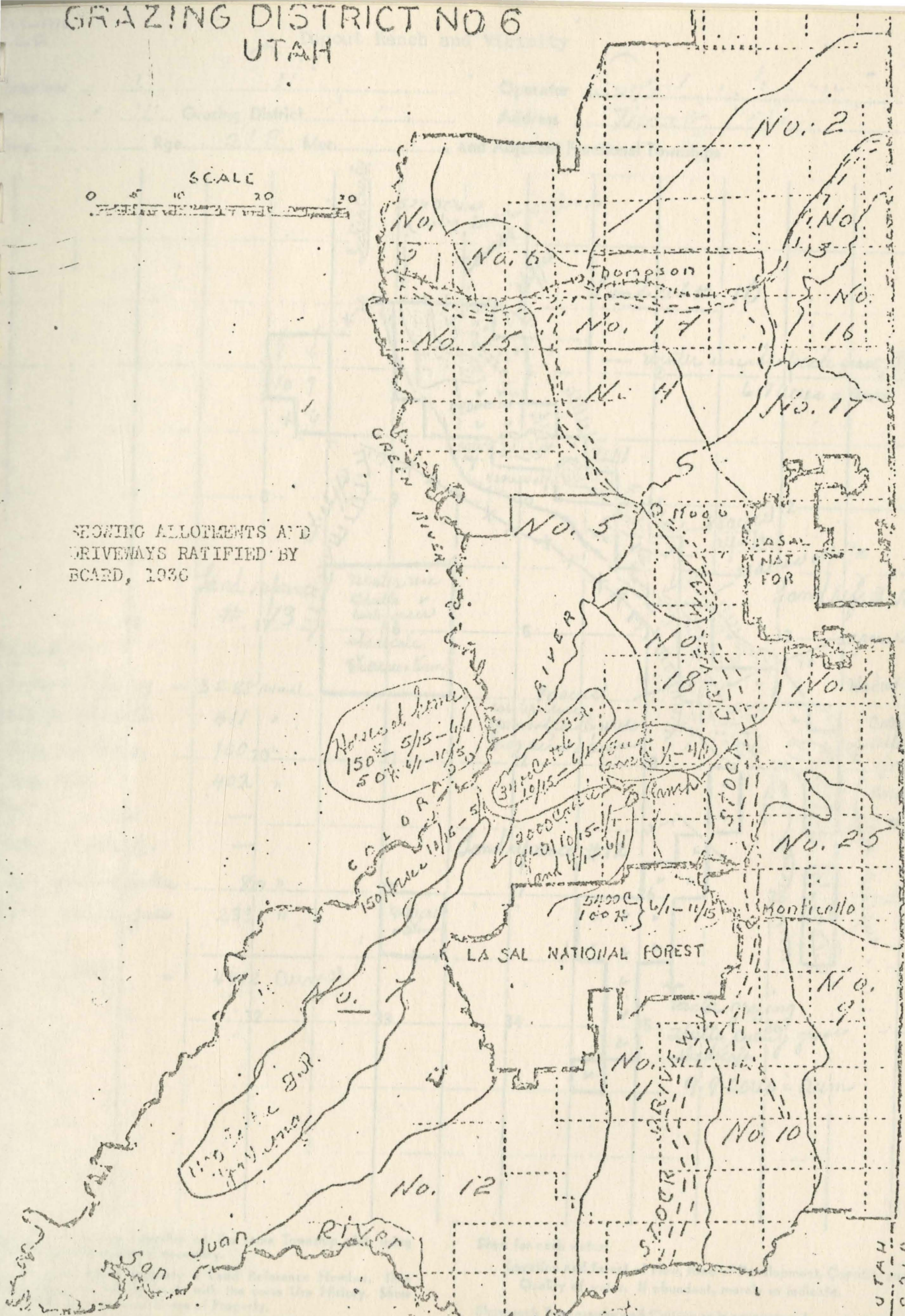
LA SAL NATIONAL FOREST



# GRAZING DISTRICT NO 6 UTAH



SHOWING ALLOTMENTS AND  
DRIVeways RATIFIED BY  
BOARD, 1936



UTAH  
COLORADO



Show for each water:  
Location and Extent of Flow, Kind of Development, Quantity and  
Quality of water. If abundant, merely so indicate.  
Show such Topography and Culture as is encountered.



DSC014213



US NPS - Denver



